

WILDERNESS

Baird Mountains.



WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

Section 701 of ANILCA designated approximately 190,000 acres of Kobuk Valley National Park as wilderness and directed that this wilderness be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, except as otherwise expressly provided for in ANILCA. The area designated as wilderness is located in the southeastern portion of the park, to the south of the Kobuk River and including the Great and Little Kobuk Sand Dunes (some of these lands have been selected by the NANA Regional Corporation). The Wilderness Act states that wilderness areas:

...shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.

Wilderness is then defined, in part, as:

an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitations, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions

ANILCA made certain exceptions to the Wilderness Act which apply only to management of wilderness areas in Alaska. These are summarized below:

Section 1110(a) provides that the secretary shall permit on conservation system units, which by definition in section 102(4) includes units of the national wilderness preservation system, the following uses:

...the use of snowmachines (during periods of adequate snow cover...), motorboats, airplanes and nonmotorized surface transportation methods for traditional activities (where such activities are permitted by this Act or other law) and for travel to and from villages and homesites. Such use shall be subject to reasonable regulations by the Secretary to protect the natural and other values of the (wilderness)... areas, and shall not be prohibited unless, after notice and hearing in the vicinity of the affected unit or area, the Secretary finds that such use would be detrimental to the resource values of the unit or area.

The National Park Service has incorporated this provision into the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 36.11) covering administration of units in Alaska (see appendix A).

Airplanes, motorboats, and snowmachines are used within the park, including the designated wilderness area of the park. The continued use of these forms of motorized equipment throughout the park, including in the designated wilderness, is allowed under the above-cited sections of ANILCA and the federal regulations. Helicopter landings are prohibited on park lands except in compliance with a permit issued by the superintendent. No other forms of motorized access are permitted except as provided by ANILCA sections 1110 and 1111.

Section 1310 provides, subject to reasonable regulation, for access to and the operation, maintenance, and establishment of air and water navigation aids, communications sites and related facilities, and facilities for weather, climate, and fisheries research and monitoring in wilderness areas.

The Wilderness Act, section 4(c), states that, subject to existing private rights, there shall be:

...no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area... and except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for purposes of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road... and no structure or installation within the area.

Section 1303 of ANILCA, however, authorizes the use and occupancy of cabins or other structures in national park system units under a permit system. Cabins or other structures not under a permit system may be used for official government business, for emergencies involving health and safety, and for general public use. Also under section 1303, the secretary of the interior may permit the construction and maintenance of cabins or other structures if he determines that the use is necessary to reasonable subsistence use. Section 1315 of ANILCA contains more specific direction on management of wilderness. This section states:

Previously existing public use cabins within wilderness . . . may be permitted to continue and may be maintained or replaced subject to such restrictions as the Secretary deems necessary to preserve the wilderness character of the area.

Section 1315 also allows the construction of new cabins and shelters if necessary for the protection of public health and safety. Appropriate committees of Congress must be notified of the intent to remove existing, or construct new public use cabins or shelters in wilderness.

The application and decision-making process established in title XI of ANILCA for siting of transportation and utility systems applies to the entire park, including areas designated as wilderness.

WILDERNESS SUITABILITY REVIEW

Section 1317(a) of ANILCA directs that a review be made of the suitability for preservation as wilderness of all lands within units of the national park system in Alaska not so designated by the act. Section 1317(b) specifies that "the Secretary shall conduct his review, and the President shall advise the United States Senate and House of Representatives of his recommendations, in accordance with the provisions of sections 3(c) and (d) of the Wilderness Act." The secretary is to complete his review by December 2, 1985.

Recommendations on whether to designate suitable areas as wilderness will be made following completion of the general management plan. An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared as part of the recommendation process. The public will have the opportunity to review and comment on these

recommendations, and public hearings will be held. Upon completion of the EIS and secretarial review, the president will make his recommendations to Congress.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness as follows:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act as an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Wilderness suitability criteria were developed that reflect the definition of wilderness contained in the Wilderness Act and the provisions of ANILCA specific to wilderness areas in Alaska. These criteria were applied to all nonwilderness lands in the park to determine their suitability for designation. These criteria relate to the physical character of the land and current land status. Factors such as appropriateness for management as wilderness and state and local concerns with wilderness management will be considered during formulation of the recommendations that follow completion of the general management plan.

For a particular tract of land to be determined suitable for wilderness designation it must meet all the following suitability criteria:

Land Status

Federal land - suitable

Federal land under application or selection - suitability pending

State and private land, patented or tentatively approved - not suitable

Private ownership of subsurface estate - not suitable

Mining Development

Areas with minor ground disturbances from past mining activities - suitable

Areas with major past ground disturbances from mining activities - not suitable

Current mining activities and ground disturbances - not suitable

Roads and ORV Trails

Unimproved roads or ORV trails that are unused or little used by motor vehicles - suitable

Improved roads and ORV trails regularly used by motor vehicles - not suitable

Airstrips

Unimproved or minimally improved or maintained - suitable

Improved and maintained - not suitable

Cabins

Uninhabited structures; hunter, hiker and patrol cabins - suitable

Inhabited as a primary place of residence - not suitable

Size of Unit

Greater than 5,000 acres adjacent to existing wilderness, or of a manageable size - suitable

Less than 5,000 acres or of unmanageable size - not suitable

Of the approximately 1,750,380 acres comprising Kobuk Valley National Park, approximately 190,000 were designated as wilderness by ANILCA. The remaining undesignated lands are subject to the wilderness suitability review required by section 1317.

Using the above criteria, most of the unencumbered federal lands within the park not designated as wilderness are determined to be suitable for wilderness designation based on their present undeveloped and unimpaired state. Approximately 1,494,500 acres are determined suitable for wilderness designation. No major past or current mining developments, no improved roads or ATV trails, and no improved or maintained airstrips are on unencumbered federal lands within the park.

There is one inhabited cabin on federal land near the mouth of the Hunt River, and this location is unsuitable for wilderness designation. Approximately 62,567 acres of NANA Regional Corporation selections are in the park at the present time, and approximately 9,387 acres of lands are interimly conveyed to this corporation. Additionally, there are approximately 10,513 acres selected as cemetery and historical sites by NANA, 8,070 acres of native allotment applications or conveyances, and one 5-acre headquarters site in the park. There are also 10,596 acres of state lands in

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WILDERNESS SUITABILITY

Kobuk Valley National Park

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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T28N

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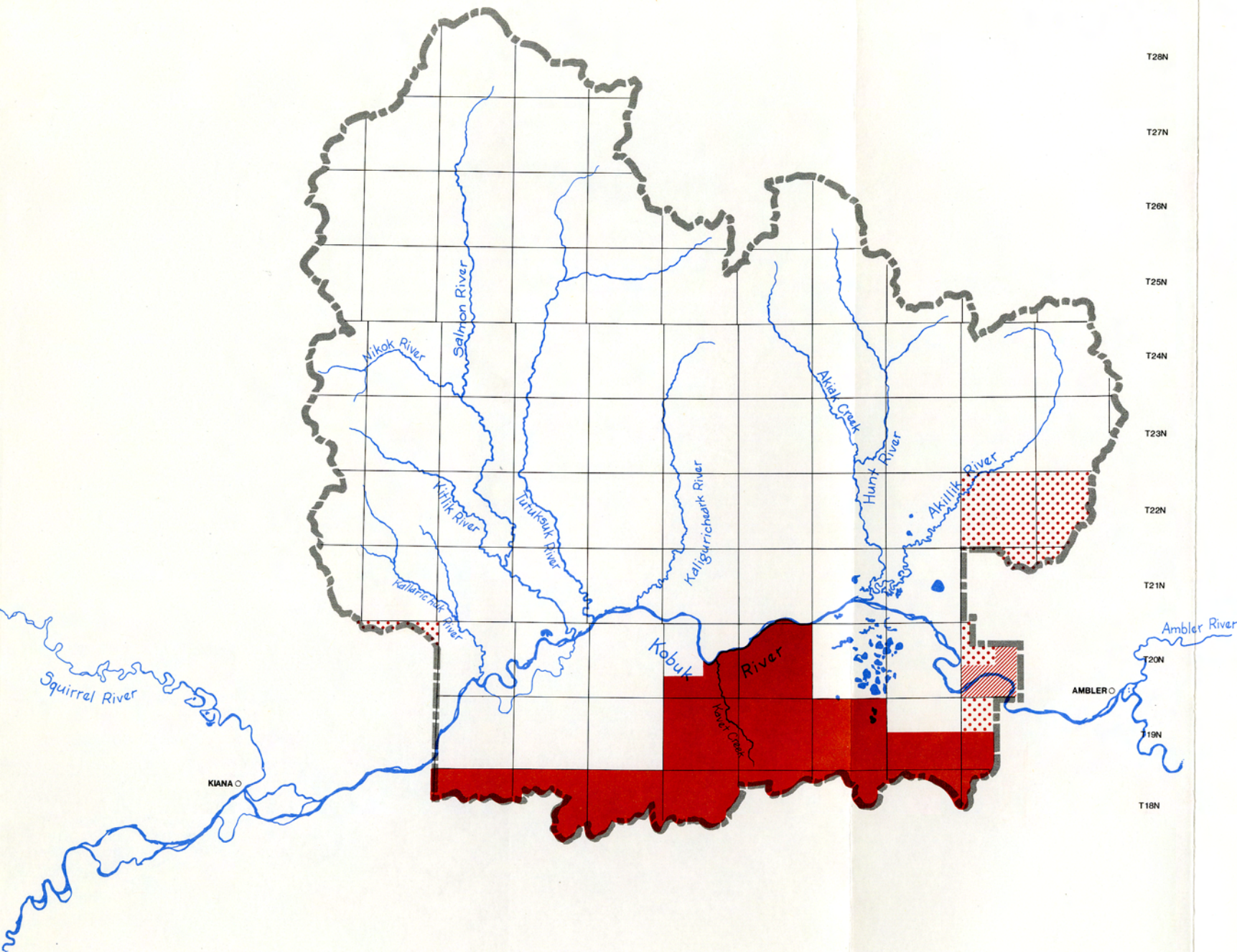
T20N

T19N

T18N

- DESIGNATED WILDERNESS
- WILDERNESS SUITABILITY PENDING
- NOT SUITABLE
- SUITABLE

NOTE: SMALL TRACT ENTRIES ARE NOT SHOWN ON THIS MAP - HOWEVER IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT PRIVATE LANDS ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION. SEE LAND STATUS MAP.



the park beneath the navigable Kobuk River. Any of these lands that have been conveyed, or may in the future be conveyed out of federal ownership, would be unsuitable for wilderness designation, whereas any of these lands that are ultimately retained in federal ownership would generally be suitable for wilderness designation (assuming that they would meet the "other suitability" criteria).

See the Wilderness Suitability map for an illustration of those lands determined to be suitable for wilderness designation. A corridor along the Kobuk River is shown as suitable for wilderness designation on this map although there are a number of small tract applications and conveyances there. In actuality, private lands in the Kobuk River corridor are unsuitable for wilderness designation, but such detail could not be illustrated on a map of this scale.

Changes in land status occurring between the time this plan is prepared and the time when the recommendations are made to the president and Congress will be reflected in those recommendations. A determination of suitability does not affect any pending selections or any other prior existing interests in lands. All future wilderness recommendations and any subsequent designations will be made subject to valid existing rights, including rights-of-way under RS 2477.

All lands determined suitable for wilderness designation will be managed under the terms of ANILCA to maintain the wilderness character and values of these lands until designation recommendations have been proposed and Congress has acted on these proposals.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Underground spring, Great Kobuk Sand Dunes.



ANILCA requires that a conservation and management plan be written for each newly created or expanded unit of the national park system in Alaska. This general management plan fulfills that legal requirement. The purpose of the plan is to present the management practices which implement the provisions of ANILCA and other relevant laws. ANILCA requires that the following factors, among others, be considered when developing a management plan:

Specific purposes for which the unit was established

Protection and preservation of the ecological, environmental, wildlife, cultural, historical, archeological, geological, recreational, wilderness, and scenic character of the unit and of areas in the vicinity of the unit

Provision of opportunities for Alaska natives residing in the unit and areas adjacent to it to continue using the area as they have traditionally done

Activities occurring in the unit and in areas adjacent to, or surrounded by, the unit

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The planning process for the general management plan for Kobuk Valley National Park was initiated with an announcement in the Federal Register that the plan was to be prepared. A general scoping meeting was held in Anchorage in March of 1984. The purpose of the meeting was to identify issues that should be addressed in the general management plan. Planning team members visited Kiana and Ambler in April; a public meeting was held in Ambler. In early May public meetings were held in Kivalina, Noatak, Kobuk, Shungnak, Selawik, Noorvik and Buckland, and in Kotzebue in June. Additional meetings were held in October in Ambler, Kobuk, and Shungnak in conjunction with preparation of a draft general management plan for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. All of these meetings helped the superintendent and park planners better understand public concerns related to the establishment and management of the park.

In March of 1984 the planning team began researching existing data for northwest Alaska and met with representatives of the Alaska Departments of Fish and Game and Community and Regional Affairs, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Federal Areas (state of Alaska), and private organizations, including the NANA Regional Corporation, Maniilaq, Kotzebue Village Corporation (KIC), and the Wilderness Society. A newsletter updating interested parties on the progress of the plan was published in July 1984.

A draft plan was published in April of 1985 that included the general management plan, environmental assessment, land protection plan, wilderness suitability review, and river management plan. Five hundred copies were distributed throughout Alaska and the contiguous 48 states.

Summary of Comments on the April 1985 Draft Plan

The comment period for the Draft General Management Plan, Land Protection Plan, and Wilderness Suitability Review began on April 10, 1985 and ended on August 30, 1985. Public meetings were held in the villages of the region and in Kotzebue, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. Over 235 letters of comment were received on the draft plans for Kobuk Valley National Park. Letters on the draft plan were received from individuals, private companies, interest groups, and federal and state agencies.

People at the public meetings made the following comments on the draft plan:

Make the plans easier to read; allow all people of northwest Alaska to hunt and fish in the parks; don't buy our native allotments; don't advertise the parks; subsistence users should be able to remove timber from the park; state what priority subsistence has over other uses; we should be able to divide our allotments between our kids; there should not be a ranger station in Ambler; rangers should have tents not cabins; the subsistence use map in the plan is not accurate; there should be no floaters on the the Kobuk River after August 15 because of conflicts with caribou hunting; staffing should be kept at the same level or reduced; don't regulate subsistence out of existence; helicopter flights will disturb wildlife and subsistence hunting; we want the status quo alternative for the park; work with the IRA councils; continue search-and-rescue operations in the park; people have lived here for thousands of years and not hurt the land; don't put any developments on the north side of Kobuk River because of possible interference with subsistence caribou hunting; reindeer have been used as pack stock in the park; emphasize that subsistence uses of private lands are compatible with the park; don't tell us what we can do on our allotments; why build housing if you intend to hire local people; consider limiting motorized use of the Kobuk River; and state how the plan can be amended.

The following comments were made in the letters received on the draft plan:

More wilderness should be designated; inholdings should be acquired; there should be no development in the park; don't allow motorized use in wilderness; continue monitoring of resources; restrict aircraft; ban pack animals; need surface access for mining; limit commercial operators and group sizes; identify lands for exchange outside the park; don't acquire private lands; there should be more provisions for visitors; recognize RS 2477 routes; adjust boundary to eliminate inholdings; acquisition of native allotments is unnecessary to protect park resources--use cooperative agreements for all allotments in the park; conduct carrying capacity studies now; designate park as class I air quality area; acquire undeveloped allotments; selected lands are suitable for wilderness; the plan calls for too much development; don't allow ATVs in the park; allow surface geological studies; close the park to recreational snowmachine use; the park staff should be local people; designate areas where aircraft are not allowed to land; cooperative agreements should be secured with NANA for management of Onion Portage; management objectives should be revised to emphasize the protection of

native culture and subsistence uses; ATVs should be allowed for subsistence purposes and for access to private lands; access to and within the park needs more detailed treatment; ATVs are traditional within the park; state regulations do not recognize "subsistence trapping" as stated in the plan; the state manages the waters of the Alaska, not the Park Service; the costs of implementing the land protection plan should be presented; state whether any lands added to the park would be "park" or "preserve"; state the revision process for the land protection plan; and exclude potential transportation routes from wilderness suitability.

Summary of Comments on the December 1985 Revised Draft Plan

Following the close of the comment period on the April 1985 draft plan, revisions were made to the plan based on public comments (see below for changes made in the April 1985 plan). A revised draft plan was prepared and distributed for public review and comment in December of 1985 for a 60-day comment period.

Sixteen letters were received that specifically addressed the revised draft plan for Kobuk Valley National Park and 49 addressed all nine National Park Service plans that were concurrently being publicly reviewed. The following comments were received on the nine plans:

The NPS should continue to protect and maintain the undeveloped character of the NPS units in Alaska; the NPS is using policies that are too restrictive -- the NPS is anti-people; the public is not capable of developing data to respond to the plans; radio repeaters do not belong in parks; private land and subsistence and mining activities will be future cultural resources; plans provide little improvement of recreational opportunities; employment opportunities for local residents were not discussed; there should be subsistence management plans for each NPS unit; definitions of traditional, temporary use, and public safety should be included; implementation of the plans will be too expensive; the management intent for fish and wildlife between the NPS and ADF&G should be clarified; NPS units should have class I air quality; dogs should be the only pack animals allowed; the NPS should make a greater effort to identify all resources, including minerals; the NPS should consider following USFWS policy on the regulation of navigable rivers; define "natural and healthy" wildlife populations and identify the management implications; the plans need to state that the Park Service has ultimate authority in managing fish and wildlife; the process for involving fish and game advisory councils and committees needs to be described; the plan needs to state that complete federal ownership of land is needed for proper management; all private lands need to be acquired; boundary adjustments could be used to eliminate private lands within park system units; inholders are threatened by unnecessary regulations; the Park Service should consider land exchanges within NPS units to minimize impacts on native allottees; native allotments should not be acquired; inholders would like to provide commercial services for park users; NEPA and 810 documents need to be prepared for land protection plans; private lands should be used as developed areas; the land protection plans violate ANILCA provisions for

access to inholdings; the NPS should limit off-road vehicles; RS 2477 maps should be deleted from plans; the use of helicopters should be restricted to administrative use; the Park Service doesn't have adjudicative or management authority for RS 2477s; snowmachines and motorboats should be further restricted; ORV determinations relating to subsistence use lack substantiation; RS 2477 rights-of-way should be resolved before wilderness recommendations are made; permits are required for use of ORVs, they should be easily attainable; the Wrangell's ORV study results should not be applied to other NPS units; methods for involving local residents in planning and management should be identified; the system for getting rural input in preparing the plans was inadequate; mechanisms for public review of resource management plans need to be provided; potential transportation corridors should not be recommended for wilderness designation; Congress should review all changes in wilderness boundaries; and wilderness areas need to be managed more liberally to be consistent with ANILCA.

The following comments were received that apply specifically to Kobuk Valley National Park:

Should be no increases in NPS staffing -- not needed; need recreational developments in the park; regarding closures to remedy conflicts between subsistence and recreation -- need to define "conflict" and "interference"; the timber permit system will be too slow for Kiana residents -- NPS should hire local agents to issue permits; Onion Portage ranger station must be on south side of river; there should be no ranger station in the Onion Portage area; allow all NANA region residents to subsistence hunt in park without permits; the 3-inch rule on trees is too restrictive; management objectives should be in front of GMP for adequate review; NPS needs to present more detail for management of the Onion Portage area, and because of caribou, archeology, visitor use, subsistence -- state requests to be involved in congressionally required cooperative agreements; Kobuk Sand Dunes -- need to address congressional intent regarding access and facilities; object to NPS administrative use of Kennicott Cabin (in caribou migration route) when cabin not available for public use; no need to set fires to restore to natural conditions -- let nature set fires; need to state intent to work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on studies; there is substantial improvement in the treatment of private lands and access discussions; object to state entering into negotiations with NPS that could reduce state authority to manage Kobuk River; inholdings should stay private; NPS should not solicit to buy allotments -- if allottees want to sell they can contact NPS -- Kiana traditional council should be involved in all negotiations regarding allotments; recognize RS 2477 routes along the Kobuk River and work with state to establish feasible road right-of-way; ORVs are traditional in the park; pack animals should be allowed; helicopters are no noisier than fixed-wing aircraft and cause no greater impact on wildlife -- present supportable criteria if helicopters are to be prohibited; should include marked winter trail on the access map; ORVs are used for subsistence in park; Salmon River landing site -- address congressional intent regarding aircraft access; NPS needs to make greater commitment to local hire; NPS should be more sensitive to local concerns; NPS should make it easier to hire local

residents -- local residents know the land and its people; NPS can hire and train local residents; NPS should properly notify residents of Noorvik and region of any actions; NPS should hire interpreter for village meetings; and the Kobuk River corridor is unsuitable for wilderness.

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PLANS

Public review and comment on the Draft General Management Plan, Land Protection Plan, and Wilderness Suitability Review, as these plans were published in April 1985 and in December 1985, has resulted in some major changes to these plans.

Major Changes to the April 1985 Draft Plan

These changes are in relation to the preferred alternative in the April draft, as presented in the December revised draft plan:

Natural Resource Management

Further discussion of fish and wildlife management authorities and roles has been added.

Subsistence users will be able to remove timber from the park under the terms of permits to be issued by the superintendent.

Public Use

Further discussion of access and circulation requirements within and to the park has been added.

River Management

Helicopters will not be allowed for recreational access to the Salmon River to avoid interference with subsistence activities. Fixed-wing aircraft access will continue.

Park Operations

A ranger station will be established in Ambler, only if the people of the village consent to such a facility.

Locations for a seasonal ranger station will be studied on the south side of the Kobuk River in the Onion Portage area.

The Park Service will conduct annual public meetings in the villages most directly affected by management of the parks in northwest Alaska.

Land Protection Plan

The acquisition of five native allotments has been changed to proposed treatment by archeological easements and cooperative agreements.

The acquisition of NANA lands in the Onion Portage area has been changed to proposed treatment by cooperative agreements and archeological easements.

The description of compatible and incompatible uses to allow for facilities and ownerships related to subsistence uses has been revised.

Major Changes to the December 1985 Revised Draft Plan

These changes (in relation to the December 1985 revised draft plan) have been incorporated into this final plan:

Natural Resource Management

Further clarification on fish and wildlife management has been added.

Public Use

Opportunities for public involvement in future decisions on access have been clarified.

Additional management intent regarding maintenance of aircraft landing strips has been provided.

Additional management intent on public use cabins has been provided.

Access provisions for subsistence use has been clarified.

River Management

Management intent regarding fixed-wing aircraft access to the Salmon River has been added.

Park Operations

A statement that NPS prefers to have a seasonal ranger station on the south side of the river in the Onion Portage area has been added.

Clarification has been made that NPS will prepare a cooperative agreement with NANA for the Onion Portage area, with opportunities for consultation with interested parties, including the state of Alaska.

The process to determine whether ATVs are traditional for subsistence by allowing for opportunities to review additional data has been revised.

Land Protection Plan

Clarification has been made about environmental compliance requirements for proposed land protection actions.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations and coordination required by law are discussed in appendix D, "Compliance with Other Laws, Policies, and Executive Orders," and appendix E, "Alaska Coastal Management Program Consistency Determination."

In addition to the above-mentioned consultations, the following individuals provided information and/or assistance in the formulation of the plan:

Carol Allison, University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks.
Judith Bittner, State Historic Preservation Officer, Anchorage.
Mat Connover, NANA Regional Strategy, Kotzebue.
Tina Cuning, Game Division, ADF&G, Anchorage.
Jim Davis, Game Division, ADF&G, Fairbanks.
Carol Delahanty, City Planner, City of Kotzebue.
Joe Dinnocenzo, Commercial Fish Div., ADF&G, Kotzebue.
Sally Gibert, Conservation System Unit Coordinator, Alaska Division of Governmental Coordination, Anchorage.
Willy Goodwin, Land Manager, KIC (Kotzebue village corporation), Kotzebue.
Kent Hall, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge, Kotzebue.
Tom Hamilton, U.S. Geological Survey, Anchorage.
Dave Hanson, Alaska Federation of Natives, Anchorage.
David James, Game Division, ADF&G, Ambler.
Terry Miller, Alaska Division of Tourism, Juneau.
Eileen Norbert, Subsistence Division, ADF&G, Kotzebue.
Pat Pourchot, NANA Regional Corporation (formerly), Anchorage.
Roland Quimby, Game Division, ADF&G, Kotzebue.
Walter Sampson, Director of Lands, NANA Regional Corporation, Kotzebue.
Timothy Smith, Asst. State Historic Preservation Officer, Anchorage.
Richard Stern, Subsistence Division, ADF&G, Nome.
Dave Winegartner, Maniilaq Association, Kotzebue.
Wendy Wolf, Alaska Coastal Management Program, Juneau.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Open lichen woodland, Kobuk Valley.



The planning for and management of the units of the national park system in Alaska is an evolving and dynamic process. The general management plan provides overall guidance and direction for the management of the park and announces the intent of the National Park Service to undertake a variety of actions pursuant to established law, regulation, and policy. Some of the actions proposed in this plan, such as closures and use restrictions and new or revised regulations, do not become effective upon approval of the general management plan. In these cases, further information collection and analysis and appropriate public involvement are needed before these actions become final. The other actions identified in the plan can be implemented upon approval of the plan.

It is recognized that involving the public in the development of significant policies and management practices and in further planning for the park can result in more comprehensive and better proposals and actions by the National Park Service, as well as better public understanding of them.

This section outlines the means by which the National Park Service will ensure continued public involvement in the ongoing planning for and management of the park. Described here are the procedures the Park Service will use for public involvement in the areas of policy development, action plans, closures, restrictions or openings, new or revised regulations, and amendments to this general management plan. The superintendent is expected to consult with all affected and interested parties as an integral part of the management of the park.

It is the policy of the Department of the Interior to offer the public meaningful opportunities for participation in decision-making processes leading to actions and policies that may significantly affect or interest them (301 Departmental Manual 2.1). Accordingly, the National Park Service will integrate public participation and the decision-making process. Public participation activities will be scheduled with other elements of the decision-making process to ensure that the timing of information both to and from the public results in the expression of public comment at points in the decision-making process where it can make the greatest contribution. The overall public participation process, closely tied to the decision-making process, will be flexible enough that methods may be added or deleted as public input shows a new level of need or interest.

All public review documents will be submitted to the state of Alaska for coordinated state review. The National Park Service will maintain an active mailing list of groups, agencies, and individuals who have expressed interest in reviewing documents. These groups, agencies, and individuals will be notified of the availability of public review documents, and upon request, copies of such documents will be made available to them.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The National Park Service manages the parks, monuments, and preserves in Alaska for the national interest and recognizes that the policies and management practices implemented by the National Park Service can be of great interest to the people of Alaska and the nation. These policies and

practices can also affect the lives of individuals living in or near the areas and the public using the areas.

To the extent practicable, when a new policy or management practice that affects the public is to be developed or an existing policy or practice is to be revised, there will be public notification, ample opportunity for comment, and thorough consideration of comments received. If significant changes are made to the proposed policy or management practice as a result of public comment, there will be additional review prior to the policy or practice being adopted.

ACTION PLANS

Several specific action plans are identified in this general management plan. Future plans include a resource management plan, wilderness recommendations, revisions to the land protection plan, and a subsistence management plan. These plans and their required public involvement are described in the appropriate management sections of this plan, and the major ones are summarized in appendix J. These more detailed plans will be initiated by the superintendent over the life of the general management plan. Although it is the intent of the National Park Service to initiate all of the implementing plans identified in the general management plan in a timely manner, the undertaking of these plans will depend on funding and other considerations that cannot be accurately forecast at this time.

As part of the ongoing planning and management for the area, internal planning documents will be prepared. These include an interpretive plan (prospectus) and a scope of collections statement. Formal public review of these types of plans and studies is not anticipated; however, parties expressing an interest in these plans will be involved as appropriate in their preparation and invited to comment on them before they are finalized. Copies will be available upon request from the superintendent.

CLOSURES, RESTRICTIONS, AND OPENINGS

In cases where the closure of areas within the park, or restrictions on activities are proposed in the general management plan, the procedures of 36 CFR 1.5 and 13.30 (13.46, 13.49 and 13.50 in the case of subsistence) and 43 CFR 36.11(h) must be followed before any proposed closures or restrictions take effect. These procedures also apply to any future proposals to open an area to public use or activity that is otherwise prohibited. The procedures of 36 CFR 1.5, 13.30, 13.46, 13.49, and 13.50 and 43 CFR 36.11(h) are contained in appendix A. A proposal is contained in this plan to close the park to the use of pack animals, except dogs (see "Access and Circulation" section in chapter III).

REGULATIONS

New regulations and revisions to existing regulations will be proposed in accordance with the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 USC 553). The National Park Service will provide a minimum 60-day comment period.

AMENDMENT OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Specific parts of the general management plan may be amended to allow for changing conditions or needs, or when a significant new issue arises that requires consideration. Amendments of this general management plan will include public involvement and compliance with all laws, regulations, and policies. If the proposed amendments are minor and not highly controversial, public notice and a 60-day waiting period will take place prior to making decisions to incorporate the changes into the plan. If the amendments are significant or highly controversial, the public will be provided opportunities to participate in the development and review of alternatives and the proposed action. This will include a minimum 60-day public comment period and public meetings as necessary and appropriate. All amendments to the general management plan must be approved by the regional director.

In the future, changing conditions will warrant preparation of a new general management plan. The public will be involved throughout the development of a new plan.

